

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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R 131530Z AUG 76
FM USMISSION GENEVA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1860
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY ROME
AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE
AMEMBASSY VIENNA

C O N F I D E N T I A L GENEVA 6525

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, SREF, IS, UR

SUBJECT: SOVIET DROPOUT PROBLEM AND ISRAELI POLICY

REF: A. TEL AVIV 5490, B. GENEVA 6396

1. ALTHOUGH MISSION HAS HERETOFORE DIRECTED ITS COMMENTS TOWARD ADVERSE FINANCIAL IMPACT OF DROPOUT PROBLEM ON LIMITED RESOURCES OF U.S. REFUGEE PROGRAM (REF B), THE EXCHANGE COMMUNICATED IN REF A POSES BROADER POLICY CONSIDERATIONS ON WHICH WE WOULD LIKE TO SUBMIT SOME THOUGHTS.

2. IT IS OBVIOUSLY MUCH TO BE HOPED THAT NAY POLICIES ADOPTED BY ISRAEL TO MEET DROPOUT SITUATION WILL NOT BE SUSCEPTIBLE OF INTERPRETATION IN ANY WAY AS INFRINGEMENTS ON BASIC HUMAN RIGHTS. FOR INSTANCE, ALTHOUGH ALTERNATIVE C (PARA 4, REF A), IF IMPLEMENTED, MIGHT BE CONSIDERED AS SIMPLY A MEANS OF EXPEDITING JEWISH REFUGEES FROM THE USSR TO THEIR PREVIOUSLY PROCLAIMED DESTINATION, I.E., ISRAEL, IT COULD, IF RIGOROUSLY ADMINISTERED, ALSO BE INTERPRETED AS COERCION.

3. FROM OUR OBSERVATION, IT IS FURTHER DEBATABLE AT
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LEAST WHETHER ABBREVIATING THE STAY IN VIENNA WOULD,

IN FACT, REDUCE THE DROPOUT RATE. WE UNDERSTAND THAT, EVEN BEFORE LEAVING THE USSR, THE REFUGEES HAVE A CLEAR CONCEPT OF THEIR INTENTIONS AND, SPECIFICALLY, WHETHER THEY WILL PROCEED TO ISRAEL OR TO OTHER COUNTRIES. THERE IS REPORTEDLY EXCELLENT FEED BACK FROM THOSE WHO HAVE LEFT THE USSR TO RELATIVES AND FREIDNDS REMAINING BEHIND, SO THAT THE LATTER HAVE DECIDED WHERE THEY WISH TO GO PRIOR TO THEIR ACTUAL DEPARTURE. (MISSOFF WAS TOLD DURING APRIL VISIT TO JAI PROCESSING POINT IN VIENNA THAT ARRIVING REFUGEES OFTEN PHONE BACK TO RELATIVES IN RUSSIA SAME DAY). THIS DECISION IS ANNOUNCED TO RECEIVING AGENCIES UPON ARRIVAL IN VIENNA, AND THE GROUP IS THEREUPON SEPARATED INTO ONE LOT PROCEEDING TO ISRAEL WITH JAI, AND THE OTHER GOING PRINCIPALLY TO ROME UNDER HIAS AUSPICES FOR PROCESSING TO OTHER COUNTRIES. THUS, IT IS HIGHLY DOUBTFUL THAT RUSHING REFUGEES THROUGH VIENNA WOULD SERVE TO DIMINSIH THE BREAK-OFF RATE TO ANY APPRECIABLE DEGREE.

4. IT IS ALSO OUT UNDERSTANDING THAT JEWISH COMMUNITIES IN THE US AND ELSEWHERE ARE VERY MUCH OF TWO MINDS ON THE SUBJECT OF FORCING RUSSION JEWISH EMIGRANTS TO PROCEED TO ISRAEL. QUESTION IS WHETHER THOSE WISHING TO SETTLE IN THE US OR OTHER COUNTRIES SHOULD BE DENIED OPPORTUNITY TO DO SO. BASIC TO THIS, OF COURSE, IS PRINCIPLE OF RIGHT TO FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT AS SET FORTH IN HELSINKI ACCORDS.

5. MISSION, THEREFORE, CONSIDERS IT MIGHT BE USEFUL FOR EMBASSY TO RAISE WITH LEVANON THE MATTER OF SCRUPULOUSLY AVOIDING POSSIBILITY OF HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS, AS GOI AND ITS ADVISERS APPROACH PROBLEM OF MEANS TO LOWER DROPOUT RATE OF JEWISH REFUGEES FROM USSR. THIS MIGHT, IN OUR VIEW, RULE OUT RECOURSE TO PROCEDURE CONTEMPLATED AS ALTERNATIVE C IN REFTTEL PARA 4. CATTO

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